

# The Messenger

The Church of St. John in the Wilderness, Copake Falls, NY  
A Non-Network Parish in the Diocese of Albany

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September 2008

## Thoughts from the Wilderness

Greetings to everyone. The peace of the Lord be with you all. I'm delighted to join you all at Church of St. John in the Wilderness as your new rector! It's truly a blessing to be among such warm and welcoming people. As many of you know, I'm thrilled to be here at historic St. John in the Wilderness in beautiful Copake Falls, New York! Thank you to everyone for your hospitality, the wonderful welcome - **and your continued generosity**, as well as the hard work on the rectory!! The moving van didn't get here from down south until two weeks after I did, but thanks to the hospitality of a number of parishioners, I've had a roof over my head since I've been here.

My friends, I notice your commitment to each other, your generosity, and your multiple talents. I thank each of you for continuing to share your gifts and leadership - musical, liturgical, educational, communication, prayer, church maintenance, pastoral, financial, as well as outreach ministries, and everything else! I ask your prayers for the vestry and all of us at St. John in the Wilderness as we discern more good possibilities in continuing and building on the already wonderful history here at St. John's. Pray that all of us in the parish continue to be open to God's guidance.

Above all, let's remember that God loves us exactly the way we are. As Mother Teresa said, it's not what we do or how much we do that's most important; but rather how much love we put into what we do. Jesus

said, "Without me, you can do nothing." That means we can relax! Because we all need God for the strength to love or do any good thing. So we can relax because God is faithful! Our part is to pray, alone and with others. God then inspires us directly, through others, through Scripture, and through many other sources.

Jesus tells us to let our light shine before others - and that's exactly what I see happening here at St. John's! The light shines here brightly, yet in such friendly, down-to-earth and unassuming ways. It's clear that the mission statement for St. John's is inspired by God. Because, "**We are** "A church whose doors are open to all our neighbors and which reaches out to serve Christ in all persons." As both our Baptismal Covenant and our Mission Statement say, we are, "A community that advocates for justice and peace for all, and respects the dignity and worth of every individual." Also, in this beautiful part of god's creation, it is most appropriate that we are, "A church which celebrates creation and shows reverence for the beauty that God has given us." You are living out that mission. Let's all rejoice in that and in God's grace which enables us. For indeed, the responses to each of our statements of faith in the baptismal covenant is, "I will with God's help." God of course, is the one who has, is, and will continue to give us the help we need.

So God is good. And we are good - we are good from the very beginning of our lives because God has created each of us.

And we are sustained in goodness by the redeeming, healing love of God, a love made most clear in Jesus. Not that we're perfect, but God consistently forgives our sins, and gives us a fresh start every day! There is much evidence of this good God. From the love that we experience in each other, to the consolation and peace that we can experience in prayer, to the beauty of nature.

Of course, there is much unexplained suffering in the world, not to mention the suffering we think we can explain. Not wanting to say this too easily or lightly, let's consider the truth of a Scripture heard last Sunday from Paul's letter to the Romans: "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." Good is stronger than evil.

Let's remember God has given us the gift of eternal life – the gift of God's Spirit in our hearts now which enables us to give and receive love now, **and** the hope that this giving and receiving will go on forever. May God's mercy sustain us when things are hard and when things are easy, and increase our joy in him and in his many blessings!

In peace,

John+

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### Episcopal Church Women

Members of the ECW met on Tuesday, September 2 to discuss upcoming events.

The UTO Fall In-Gathering will start in October. We will begin collecting for Operation Christmas Child Shoe Boxes in a few weeks. Susan Mollo will once again chair this event. In November Babs Croteau will get a list of children's names and wishes for Christmas Friends, Collections for this event will commence in early November.

The ladies of St. John have been invited to a luncheon by our friends at the West Copake Reformed Church on Tuesday, September 30, at 12:00. Please RSVP to Babs at 851- 9040. We have been asked to provide dessert.

We are planning our Annual Christmas party for Sunday, December 6. Susan will inquire about menu and prices at the Taconic Wayside Inn. If anyone has other suggestions, you may contact Susan at 329-0395.

Thanks to Karen Flynn and Bob Callahan for helping to clean up Burke Hall so we could hold our meeting there.

Our next meeting is scheduled for October 7 at 1:00 PM. Please join us.

Susan Mollo, ECW Secretary

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### Lectionary Readings for September

#### Sunday, September 14:

18<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 19)

Exodus 14:19-31

Psalm 114

Romans 14: 1-12

Matthew 18:21-35

#### Sunday, September 21:

19<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 20)

Exodus 16:2-15

Psalm 105:1-6,37-45

Philippians 1:21-30

Matthew 20:1-16

#### Sunday, September 28:

20<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 21)

Exodus 17: 1-7

Psalm 78:1-4,12-16

Philippians 2:1-13

Matthew 21:23-32

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### Province II's Lambeth Reflections

Province II (Dioceses in NY, NJ and assorted overseas dioceses) will hold a post-Lambeth conference at Trinity Cathedral, Trenton, NJ. From 10 AM to 4 PM on Saturday, October 4. Titled "Reflections", the conference will view the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion in the light of the summer's meetings. Its keynote speakers will include +Gene Robinson of New Hampshire, +Chilton Knudson of Maine, and our own +Bill Love.

As Bp Love's most recent Diocesan Update shows clearly the Lambeth Conference failed to resolve the social and theological issues that confront the Anglican Communion, the Episcopal Church and our diocese. Indeed, the preceding GAFCon meeting added thrust to the forces that are working to purify the Communion, by destroying it if necessary. As ABP. Rowan Williams has said repeatedly, these are perilous times for the Church of England and its descendants.

It is more than usually important that Albany's liberal and moderate Episcopal voices be heard in Province II. Chuck Perfater, the Province's Executive Coordinator, hopes our diocese will be well represented at "Reflections." So do we of the AVM Board. The registration fee of \$20 is money well spent.

Because driving to Trenton from Albany takes 3 1/2 hours, some of you may wish to stay overnight. Chuck Perfater recommends two Marriott hotels, the Lafayette Yard in Trenton (\$99/night, double:609-421-4000), the other in Ewing (\$151/nighty, 609-771-8100). A brief visit to

Hotels.com revealed several other lower priced, but well-reviewed hotels within 10 miles of Trenton.

At present there is no alternative to car-pooling. A bus may be provided bu that is not certain. We will keep you posted if a bus is available.

### ...And the Bishop's

The Diocese of Albany has replaced its infrequent Priest's and Deacon's Updates with more frequent Diocesan Updates. Whereas the old PDU's served mainly to announce significant events, the DU's are becoming important sources of other information as well. For example, one dated August 28 contains Bp. Love's long reflection on "Lambeth and the Future of Anglicanism." To access that message and get on the distribution list for future DU's -a step that's worth taking - email [pdupdates@albanydiocese.org](mailto:pdupdates@albanydiocese.org).

The Bishop's reflections are too long to summarize in The Messenger. You can find comments on them on the AVM website - albanyviamedia.org.

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### September Birthdays



- 9/4 Beverly Mitchell
- 9/8 Virginia Boughton
- 9/9 Jessica Kay
- 9/23 Gabrielle Marie Kay
- 9/27 Genevieve Annette Kay
- Rebecca Briggs

